

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP
11/18/09
Environmental Defense Center Conference Room,
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara

Present: Linda Krop (EDC), Greg Helms (The Ocean Conservancy), Jean Holmes (League of Women Voters of SB), Michael Sheehy (SB Channelkeeper), Jackie Dragon (Pacific Environment), Michael Smith (Gray Whales Count), Debra Herring, Kristi Birney Rieman (EDC), Vic Cox, John Ugoretz (Navy)

CINMS Staff: Michael Murray [by phone]

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

- A. Eight Sanctuary Advisory Councils have adopted motions or resolutions supporting Sanctuary action to address ocean acidification. Other Councils will consider similar action in the near future.
- B. Bruce Steele is meeting with officials in Washington, D.C.
- C. EDC has a few copies of “A Sea Change” that can be borrowed for small, private showings. Groups can also contact the producers to obtain the film for larger public showings.
- D. Education: Some CWG members plan to attend the SET meeting tomorrow night to discuss public education and outreach strategies.

III. WHALES AND SHIPPING

- A. Report follow-up: Dan Basta wrote a letter acknowledging our report, praising us on our work. He will discuss the matter within NOAA. CINMS staff will also meet with NMFS.
- B. Acoustics: CINMS will review the recommendations from the SAC report and provide an update on progress implementing the recommendations. Mike Murray alerted us to the March 2009 Updated Office of National Marine Sanctuaries “Acoustic Impact Policy Statement.” Michael Smith reported that Gray Whales Count is experimenting with passive acoustic monitoring offshore Ellwood.
- C. John Ugoretz noted that ships are moving outside the Channel in response to the State’s clean fuel standards. He pointed to the concern that ships travelling outside the Channel do not have the benefit of established shipping lanes, and that there could be conflicts between oil tankers and faster cargo ships. John also mentioned that he has seen fin and blue whales in the

shipping lanes near San Pedro.

IV. MLPA/MARINE RESERVES

- A. BRTF: Greg Helms reported on the final BRTF meetings, and the unanimous decision to forward a “preferred alternative” to the Fish and Game Commission. The BRTF action also included forwarding some of the stakeholder options. Greg presented and discussed the map adopted by the BRTF. The map, which is weaker than the “compromise” proposal from the regional working groups, includes some quality areas but in general the protected areas are not as large or connected as the conservation groups endorsed. Nevertheless, the map may present the most viable option to being the Fish & Game Commission review process.
- B. Fish & Game Commission: the Commission will hold a joint meeting with the BRTF on December 9 and select the preferred alternative for environmental review.

V. OFFSHORE ENERGY PROJECTS

- A. CWG Report: Kristi reported that she is working with a Bren student to conduct research and prepare a report for CWG and SAC consideration. She plans to reach out to CWG and SAC members for input.
- B. Sanctuary status: Mike informed us that the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has prepared a “Frequently Asked Questions” document regarding Alternative Energy and Oil & Gas Projects in National Marine Sanctuaries. The document points out that, in general, projects are not allowed within Sanctuaries. In addition, the 2005 Energy Policy Act prevents the Minerals Management Service from permitting projects in Sanctuary waters. Even if projects are proposed outside Sanctuary boundaries, they may impact Sanctuary resources (similar to aquaculture projects).

VI. OTHER SAC ISSUES

- A. MERITO Funding: Kristi and Debra worked with Maria (Education Rep) to draft a letter for SAC consideration, requesting funding to support the very successful MERITO program.
- B. “Greening” Ideas for the SAC: We discussed ways to make SAC meetings more environmentally friendly, such as (1) not providing bottled water; (2) asking SAC members to bring their own cups (and possibly utensils as well); and (3) facilitating carpooling.